

**United States Department of Agriculture · Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service · Civil Rights
Enforcement and Compliance**

December 11, 2001

To: See Distribution

Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint Settlement
Programs Agreements

As Administrator, I am committed to reducing the number of complaints of employment Service discrimination filed by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) employees and applicants. EEO complaints may be resolved through a number of avenues including but not limited to decisions by administrative law judges at Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOQ hearings, written decisions by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Civil Rights, and settlement agreements drafted by EEO specialists and/or Agency representatives in conjunction with managers, employees, and employee representatives.

I support resolving EEO complaints through the presentation of reasonable settlement offers and want to emphasize the importance of exercising good judgment and applying appropriate criteria in resolving both formal and informal EEO complaints.

To ensure that EEO settlement agreements are durable and preserve the integrity of the EEO process, all written agreements will continue to be carefully reviewed by the Director of Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance (CREC before signatures are obtained. This review process was instrumental in the closure of approximately 412 EEO complaints. The Directors of Human Resources and CREC will coordinate clearance of all agreements that award Civil Service benefits including promotions, pay, step increases, leave, time off, back pay, leave restoration, retirement compensation,, resignation, and separation. Settlement agreements negotiated by the Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services'

Hearings and Appeals Branch are not subject to this review process.

Thank you for supporting APHIS in maintaining an EEO process with integrity and accountability. We currently have 196 cases in the Fiscal Year 2002 inventory arid, though we have made great strides in reducing our EEO complaints, I encourage you to continue working diligently to resolve them. Please provide a copy of this memorandum to managers in your program area.

Bobby R. Acord

Bobby R. Acord
Administrator

APHIS Protecting American Agriculture
An Equal Opportunity Employer